

262.13092

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, CALIF.

262.13092  
P688 cf

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES  
OF  
POPE PIUS IX.

A TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM AND LOVE  
TO THE MEMORY OF THE  
SAINTLY AND GLORIOUS PONTIFF,

BY ONE OF HIS DEVOTED AND GRATEFUL CHILDREN IN CHRIST,

REV. JOHN F. CASSIDY, D. D.  
0

*(Graduate of the American College at Rome.)*

LIBRARY ST. MARY'S COLLEGE  
PANKGYRIC AT THE ANNIVERSARY REQUIEM OF PIUS IX., IN ST. ROSE'S CHURCH,  
SACRAMENTO, CAL.

34205

SAN FRANCISCO:  
1880.

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, CALIF.

[COPYRIGHT SECURED.]

DEDICATED TO THE  
ORIGINAL THIRTEEN STUDENTS  
OF THE  
AMERICAN COLLEGE, ROME,  
BY  
ONE OF THEMSELVES.

## NOTICE.

---

IN order to avoid unduly lengthening the memorial services, and because of the mournful nature of the occasion, the portions of the following memoir relating to the Holy Father's participation in the solemn public ceremonies of the Church were omitted from the eulogy pronounced in Sacramento, in which his person and character were alone delineated. They were delivered on a previous occasion in St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco; and I have thought it fit to insert them here as forming an integral part of my recollections; deeming them, moreover, of special interest now, since Pius IX. was the last who has appeared in the sacred splendor so eminently becoming the papal ceremonial. Let us hope that our Holy Father, Leo, may soon be free to gratify and exalt the devotion of the faithful, as was the wont of his predecessor of sacred memory.

J. F. C.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES  
OF  
POPE PIUS IX.,

BY  
REV. JOHN F. CASSIDY, D. D.

---

BELOVED FRIENDS IN CHRIST:

In the year 1871, a song of triumph, praise and thanksgiving—a new song, such as had never been heard by men—was first chanted in the central city of Christendom. Its tones were quickly caught by ears expectant and repeated by joyous throats; and, swelling in their march, they soon resounded in one grand chorus of over two hundred millions to the very confines of earth, hushing all other sounds and filling the rest of creation with awe, surprise and admiration. We may even devoutly and reasonably imagine the angelic choirs in suspense, in wonder and complacence stooping to drink in the novel strains and then re-echoing them throughout the celestial realms.—And what, pray, was the burden of this new song? The goodness and mercy and providence of God for us His earthly children, as shown in an extraordinary manner in His Vicar and our Supreme Head on earth, the Pope,—Pius IX.

And when the grand pageant reached these distant shores and the vast melody broke on the ears of the youngest children of the Church, we too joined in and lisped our child-like lay, and then, doubtless, yearned to be of the favored few who stood around the throne of Peter and Pius, and feasted their eyes and ears and hearts and souls on its triumph, which was the cause of such grand jubilee throughout the Christian world. But such a pleasure could not be vouchsafed to all: some of us must needs stay home and mind the house, striving to content ourselves with the thought that it was grand and glorious without us and with our own humble reflection of it here.

But now, alas! how changed the scene! Our smiles are washed away in tears of sorrow; our hearts are filled with sadness; a consciousness of bereavement takes full possession of our souls; a gloomy atmosphere envelops our whole being, while that song of triumph, praise and gratitude, which, from long usage, had become like to a household anthem, is suddenly hushed, and in its stead a plaintive dirge is murmured by an afflicted people. For Pius IX., the great, glorious and saintly Pontiff, the sage and venerable Patriarch, the devoted and provident Father, has been taken from us.

As few, if any of you, have enjoyed the privilege and happiness of a visit to the Eternal City, you are, I have thought, anxious to hear in a quiet way from one more favored in this respect than yourselves, something of our holy Father, Pius, whose long reign over us has been for six years the reason of such great rejoicing, and whose demise is now so universally lamented; and this laudable desire I purpose endeavoring to gratify to-day.

Let me premise that whosoever expects to listen to an elaborate essay, fraught with learning or fanciful speculation, will be sadly disappointed. I am not going to draw an ideal picture of the Pope—to sketch him as he was not—but, perhaps, (some might think), should have been. Nor to rehearse what has been written and published of him already (though that, perhaps, were more complete than anything I can hope to produce); for such a treat could more readily and easily be enjoyed elsewhere than here. Nor would I attempt, unless in vain, to fully represent him to you as he was in himself; for, from what glimpses I have been favored with of his admirable and amiable qualities, I am convinced that I am ignorant of much which would be required for the drafting of a life-like portrait of him—which I therefore leave to others who have enjoyed a deeper insight into and a more familiar knowledge of his person, character and virtues than have been granted me. I am furthermore convinced that *all* the attractive features of that character or the excellence of those virtues have not been revealed to me or *any* man, among even his most intimate attendants or most enthusiastic admirers.

My purpose—the task which I have cheerfully though diffidently assumed—is to conjure up the thoughts that stirred my youthful brain, and to revive the feelings that played upon my boyish heartstrings when in his blessed company; and, as best I can, express the one and in you inspire the other. If there be any present who expect more or else than this they are doomed to disappointment. Even to picture Pius IX., as I have known him, is not within the range of my descriptive powers. I feel, however, called upon to essay an expression, be it never so feeble, of some of the ideas

and impressions which he has left on my mind—ideas and sentiments never in time to be effaced or obscured. Yet, should I fail, as I fear I may, to satisfy your craving after a knowledge of him, I would beg you to attribute the failure rather to a want of appreciation or the weakness of memory in me than to any defect in the subject of my sketch.

I was one of the ORIGINAL THIRTEEN youths from these States, who formed the nucleus of the American College in Rome. That institution, which should be dear to every American Catholic, and an object of pride to every friend of learning in this country, whatever be his creed, was opened December 8th, 1859. I dwelt in Rome during the six years following that date, and like my companions frequently enjoyed a sight of the Pope in the solemn public ceremonies of the Church, (such as are to be witnessed only in Rome), and in private conversations and companionship with him. I shall mention and briefly describe a few of these occasions, before placing before you my estimate of the person and character of Pope Pius IX.

# PART I.

---

## SOLEMN PUBLIC PAPAL CEREMONIES.

---

### 1.—MASS IN ST. PETER'S.

And first in order comes the Papal Solemn Mass, which is celebrated in St. Peter's Church thrice in the year, namely, on Christmas, Easter Sunday and the festival of SS. Peter and Paul. Those are the only days on which the Pope publicly celebrates Solemn Mass.

ST. PETER'S is a massive pile of symmetry and elegance of which no amount of description would convey a just conception. It is cruciform, more than six hundred feet in length, four hundred and fifty feet wide, and nearly as high, and will accommodate one hundred thousand persons. The materials are most costly and durable: their arrangement perfect in pleasing proportion. Its symmetry is its chief feature and hides its vastness. Each and every one of the colossal parts is toned down by its relation to the others: so much so, that the new arrival fails to discern anything monstrous about it. It is only by separating one part from the rest that one can realize its size. For instance, the angels supporting the holy-water fonts are excellent representations of cherubs or baby-angels, and yet their figures are six feet in height, and proportionately massive in their infantine forms. Again: The medallions, at the base of the dome, containing the four Evangelists, present in mosaic the inspired

writers as figures, which if standing erect, the eye takes it, might measure eight feet, whereas in reclining postures they actually measure twenty-eight feet, from head to feet. Also: the letters, "*Th es Petrus,*" etc.," around the base of the dome, which I have often scrutinized and scanned carefully, appeared to me about sixteen inches long, and yet they each measure five feet. And so of the other parts, all which are really not very distant from the visitor. All this is due to the proportions of the structure. It contains some forty altars, the chief of which stands isolated, so that the celebrant faces the congregation, over the tomb of the Apostles, beneath the "vast and wondrous dome, to which Diana's marvel was a cell." No one but the Pope celebrates mass on this altar, except by special permission of His Holiness.

The portion in the rear of the altar, set apart for the sanctuary on these occasions, is more spacious than our largest church here. It is lined on the outer edge with platforms occupied by diplomatic representatives of foreign courts, the chief officers of the army with their staffs, and other lay dignitaries. Within these are ranged Priests, Bishops, Patriarchs, Cardinals and those in immediate attendance on the Holy Father, all robed in garments appropriate to their offices. In lieu of a sanctuary-railing, a file of Swiss Guards, encased in antique coat-of-mail, and the Pope's body-guard, called the Noble Guard, (which is composed of noblemen most accomplished and skilled in arms), clad in the richest of military uniforms, keep clear the space immediately around the altar. A passage is also kept open from the altar to the front door by a single line of the Palatine Guard, numbering some sixteen hundred men.

The choir is composed of about thirty members, all masters of music and possessed of unequalled voices. They always sing without any instrumental accompaniment whatever. Harmony is their forte.

Now enters the procession of ecclesiastical dignitaries, wending its way to the sanctuary, and shortly a suppressed murmur announces the arrival of the "HOLY FATHER!" who is seated on the *Sedes Gestatoria*, or throne, borne on the shoulders of eight clerics. The view is all that could be desired. He advances slowly, blessing on the way the kneeling multitudes, till the altar is reached, and, after the usual preparations, begins the Mass.—Of the Papal Mass and the accompanying ceremonial in general, I would merely observe, that there is no apparent aim at gaudiness or pompous display. All is smooth, simple, natural,—yet withal gorgeous, grand, impressive, awe-inspiring and pleasing beyond description. One feels, for once in his life, that the Mass is being celebrated as it should be.

But I must not pass, without special notice, the Consecration. Yet, what shall I say of it?

I should first remark, that up to this time, there have been observable no evidences of recollectedness or especial reverence in the people. Practical Catholics always hear some other Mass. They never repair to St. Peter's with the purpose of satisfying their obligation to hear Mass by attending at this one. They come more with a view to see things done well and to admire, than to indulge their private devotion. No one is disedified by the enquiries in loud whispers after information, the eager eyes and anxious ears of those around him. It seems quite natural. But when the Consecration begins, a heavy fall of arms, a shuf-

fling of tens of thousands of feet (preparatory to kneeling) on the marble pavement are heard, and all is hushed. The Holy Father, with the sacred species elevated in his hands, turns slowly to all the points of the compass, something after the manner of the priest in giving Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. And during the oblation most exquisite and soft tones emerge from the apex of the dome four hundred feet above, and, gradually swelling in volume, they descend and spread till the vast space with all its recesses seems wrapt in unearthly melody. These strains float from silver trumpets manipulated by master hands, and are commemorative of an old legend that once the angels in this place accompanied the Consecration with their heavenly harmony. The sacred drama lasts perhaps five minutes; and, without presuming to describe the effect on the worshippers, I will confidently assert, that not one of those thousands would willingly exchange those five minutes for a whole year of any other kind of pleasurable emotions which he had ever experienced. The adoring multitudes rise slowly and reluctantly to their feet, and the Mass proceeds.

## 2.—CANDLEMAS AND PALM SUNDAY.

The distinctive features of these solemnities are the blessing of the Candles and Palms, processions with the same and the singing of the Passion. The candles are large wax tapers, painted in oil colors by master brushes and otherwise decorated with artistic taste. The palm-leaves, which are taken from the tree of that name, are woven with consummate skill into varied shapes and designs to please the eye, and, like the candles, are tastefully ornamented. The ceremony of

blessing these ended, the procession is formed, all composing it, including the Holy Father, bearing candles or palms (as the case may be), and passes around, within the church (St. Peter's.) It is on such occasions as these, that is, in processions, that the practice of carrying the Holy Father, elevated on his throne above the surrounding heads, is appreciated. Few could otherwise enjoy a view of him, and without that view no one would be satisfied with the ceremonies. At such times he is always vested in full pontificals and bears on his head the *Tiara* or triple-crown which is distinctive of the Papacy.—These processions are grand indeed, but I withhold comment on them till I come to mention that of Corpus Christi, which eclipses all others.—The Passion is recited and chaunted much in the style in vogue in all our churches, but with the excellence attainable only by the selected and cultured voices of the Land of Music, the Home of all the Arts.

### 3.—HOLY THURSDAY.

The washing of the Disciples' feet and their being waited on by their Divine Master are commemorated in the Vatican Basilica on Holy Thursday. In one of the wings of the church an open space is reserved for the former of these ceremonies. The view is excellent, being unobstructed by an altar or other intervening structure. And as the aged Pontiff, in imitation of his Divine Lord, (John, xiii. 14,) kneels and washes, wipes and kisses the feet of twelve students selected for the purpose from different colleges, every beholder is highly edified and pleased.—THE SUPPER: Then all repair to a large hall over the vestibule of St. Peter's, where a semi-sacred scene is enacted, that, for an air

of charming simplicity and Christian charity, could scarcely be equalled by aught else. The twelve are seated along one side of a table, and facing such spectators as have been fortunate enough to secure a position in the limited space. The supper is a sumptuous one, though of light materials, and is served out to each by the Holy Father, with an air of ease, condescension and gracious dignity which is peculiarly his own, and takes the sympathies of all observers by storm. On every countenance a beam of pleasure and admiration plays. If the Holy Father were to hear the laudatory remarks made about him just then, it would tax his humility severely.

#### 4.—A CANONIZATION.

I was, too, among the fortunate ones who were present at a ceremony, the like to which has not been witnessed by most of those even who have spent years in the Eternal City—namely, a Canonization—that of the Japanese Martyrs. Neither expense nor labor is spared by the Church in her endeavor to render the public proclamation of her children's sanctity and glory appropriate, and it is at all times a gorgeous and imposing celebration. But the occasion of which I speak was unusually so. This circumstance was due to the fact of there being at that time assembled in Rome a large number of Prelates, convened for other purposes; though even this coincidence should not, perhaps, be deemed accidental, for Almighty God may have so arranged for the greater glory and consolation of His suffering Church and the confusion of her enemies. Some three or four hundred Bishops, Patriarchs and other Church dignitaries helped by their

attendance to enhance the grandeur of the ceremony. For months previously the interior of St. Peter's was being decorated and embellished to such an extent that on the great day scarcely any part of the vast basilica was recognizable to those familiar with it only in its every-day attire. The immense pilasters and other works of art, engraved in marbles of every variety of color and value on the walls, were screened from view by tapestries, painted imitations of stones and many other devices; wax candles by tens of thousands were arranged in divers forms, and, altogether, the church donned a novel appearance. I would not say that the change was an improvement on the normal condition of the building, for it is hardly susceptible of such; yet, because new, it pleased the old frequenters, and the effect of the renovation was withal sublime.

Knowing that the occasion would draw very many to the church, I, in company with one of my fellow-students, repaired thither as early as 5 A. M. to secure, if possible, a good view; but, though we fared better than the majority, we paid dearly for our pleasure. We wormed our way to within, perhaps, two hundred feet of the Grand Altar, and there remained wedged in for seven or eight mortal hours, at times unable to touch the pavement with our feet, so great was the pressure. Every available space in the church was occupied by fully twice as many persons as it was designed to accommodate with standing room, and a still larger number was outside. In company with those usually forming such processions the hundreds of Prelates from foreign climes, all clad in rich vestments, marched before the Holy Father, who suffered nothing from comparison with any or all of these, his coadjutors in

the government of Christ's Church. He was easily Chief among Princes. . . . At the eventful moment the *Te Deum* was intoned by the Pope and chorused by the immense mass assembled.

After those eight hours of excruciating bliss or delicious torment (as you will), we two hungry and worn youths sought refreshment within the sacred precincts of our *Alma Mater*, satiated with the entertainment of the day. I must, however, remark that St. Peter's is rarely ever so crowded: yet, even then, the sacrifice of convenience and comfort involved is more than balanced by the glory of the scene.

#### 5.—BENEDICTION IN FRONT OF ST. PETER'S.

Another public ceremony in which the Holy Father figures conspicuously is the Benediction in front of St. Peter's, pronounced by him on Easter Sunday. As a triumphal celebration, having nothing sacred about it except in the part enacted by the Pope himself, this exhibition stands preëminent above anything else of the kind in Rome, or indeed elsewhere. The gathering of people is the largest of the year. The Roman people turn out *en masse* to receive the blessing of the Holy Father and to testify their devotion to his person and rule over them: and, of course, not one of the thousands of visitors from foreign countries—of whom the greatest number of the season is then in the city—could be induced to absent himself. I remember one year when the number of foreign arrivals during the single week preceding Palm Sunday was reported at forty thousand. The hotels charged ten dollars per day and were over-crowded: many sojourners were obliged to seek lodgings from

twelve to twenty miles out in the country, whence they repaired early each morning to witness the ceremonies of Holy Week.

Well, all these are gathered on the occasion in question in the great circular *piazza* in front of St. Peter's. The number present must exceed two hundred thousand souls. All eyes are fixed on the *loggia* or balcony some fifty feet above the center door of the church. At the appointed time a small procession of Prelates comes to the front, and, dividing, makes way for the Holy Father, who in full pontificals is carried on his throne. Profound silence reigns throughout the vast assemblage; the indulgences attached to the Papal Benediction are published, and Pius IX. proceeds to enact a rôle which nature and grace have preëminently fitted him to fill. Still seated on the throne he chants in a loud, clear voice, audible several hundred feet away, the preliminary prayers; the people fall on their knees, and the Holy Father rises to his feet, and, with outstretched arms, as if embracing the whole world, invokes the blessing of the Most Holy Trinity on God's children throughout the earth. The volume of his voice is truly wonderful just then, its tones reaching every ear. The sacred names are sung with such force and distinctness as to be easily heard by probably over one hundred thousand persons; and, after the slow, measured utterance of each, cannon is discharged at the fortress of Sant' Angelo, nearly a mile distant, by means of electricity.

Now, dear friends, it would be folly in me to attempt to describe the emotions aroused in the hearts of the people while they feast their eyes on the figure of the Holy Father and drink in the unctious tones of his voice. Have you ever wept, aye, cried aloud with

joy? Have the fountains of your hearts gushed forth in a kind of ecstasy? If so, you can divine, without the aid of my cold words, the nature of those emotions.—The last syllable is scarcely suffered to die away when the pent-up feelings of the multitude seek expression in one grand burst of exultation. The vociferous, almost wild cheering of the crowd, the clangor of a dozen brass bands and the booming of cannon, both at the fortress and on the *piazza*, produce a medley of discordant sounds, which nevertheless is pleasing because joyous; and the waving of handkerchiefs and flags enhances the life and gayety of the scene. The Holy Father, reclining on his throne, looks down for a few moments on the vast forest of uncovered heads, seemingly complacent with this demonstration of loyalty and devotion, and then retires to much-needed refreshment and rest.

#### 6.—CORPUS CHRISTI.

The glory and glitter of all other processions wane at the approach of this pageant as the light of the moon pales in the presence of the rising sun. The great *piazza* in front of St. Peter's is encompassed with four rows of massive stone columns, surmounted with a heavy roof, and forms an appropriate foreground to the giant basilica. Through the central aisle of this colonnade the triumphal parade defiles for a circuit of perhaps a half-mile. Military companies and select guards in their holiday uniforms, delegations from the various religious orders in their several habits, bishops and cardinals in rich vestments slowly advance in graduated ranks, while bands, stationed at intervals throughout the lines, discourse in solemn

and soothing tones sacred marches. The triumphal march of a victorious general in old Rome would but ill compare with this one. Yet, all these are but nothing, and fade, as they should, into insignificance and utter oblivion at the approach of the HOLY OF HOLIES, Who is borne in a rich remonstrance by the Pope kneeling on an elevated platform.

It may seem irreverent, yet I trust it is not, for true it is that the devout worshippers cannot refrain from feasting their eyes on the angelic features of the Holy Father. I say "*angelic*" designedly, for it often occurred to my mind, when gazing at him on those occasions, that his venerable locks and saintly countenance and prayerful lips would not mar the sacred mood of the adoring spirits about the throne of God. This may appear extravagant to hearers, but, I assure you, not to beholders.—The procession occupies three hours or more; and, like all the public ceremonies in which the Pope figures, is, in its general "make-up" and its distinctive features, grand, sublime and charming beyond any other like human exhibition. Were you present at them, your unanimous verdict would be that mine has been but a feeble effort to convey to you a true idea of them. Yet, take what I have said for what it is worth, multiply by ten, and the result will supply you with something near a fair statement of the case.

#### 7.—VISITS IN HALF-STATE TO CHURCHES.

Besides these solemn functions there are many occasions on which the Holy Father appears in public with less ceremony, such as his visits to the churches throughout the city.....But I must abstain from

dilating on these, and I would simply remark that, robed in the richest of vestments, or clad in his everyday attire, carried in triumph amid a mass of sacred wealth, or engaged in the prosaic and tedious duties of his office, the deportment and movements of Pius IX. were uniformly characterized by an ease, composure, dignity and grace which were perfectly charming.

## PART II.

---

### PERSON AND CHARACTER OF PIUS IX.

Immediately after the opening of our college we repaired to His Holiness to announce the event, and were received kindly. A few weeks afterwards he honored us with a stately visit, and we succeeded in according him a worthy reception. A few days after this visit, in answer to an invitation, we called at his palace (the Vatican), through which he strolled with us for hours. On many subsequent occasions also we enjoyed his blessed company. He seemed much taken with the students of the several colleges in the city, and frequently visited them. In those of our college he appeared to take more than common interest. Perhaps I say this, because everyone thinks his own the best mother in the world; but many others imagined that they discerned some such preference. In these visits to the different colleges the Holy Father was so familiar and affable that the students learned much of him, and the better they knew him the more they loved him. Now, let me try to tell you what I know and think of him.

### HIS PHYSIQUE.

When I last saw him, Pius IX. was seventy-three years old. Then—and I believe he had not changed much before his demise (except becoming more attractive and venerable with age)—physically he was stout

and strong. He was rather a little under the medium height, but his shortness of stature was observable only when brought in contrast with more towering forms. Standing alone, and as he generally appeared in public ceremonies, he presented a very imposing and stately figure. Many, among them myself, thought his the most handsome, pleasing and charming countenance they ever beheld in a person of his build. In conversation his voice had a soft, paternal tone. When chanting the offices of the Church, it agreeably surprised every listener. I, certainly, have never heard another such voice, so melodious, rich, full, strong and clear. When, raised some seventy feet above the pavement of St. Peter's church, he gave his benediction, every syllable was distinctly heard six hundred feet away, and, of course, the sound of his voice much further off. Twenty years ago his hair, which was very abundant, retained its iron-gray of fifty years ago, but when I left Rome it had already begun silvering. His health was excellent, and he rarely took vacation and scarcely any respite from his very arduous labors, for which he was ever ready. But you ought to have seen him, and you would surely say that you had never seen another like to him.

#### CHARACTERISTIC VIRTUES.

In speaking of his virtues or qualities of mind and heart, I shall allude to those only which shone most conspicuously, and which attracted the attention of the passing observer, remarking at the same time, that a more intimate acquaintance with them revealed their depth and purity.

## 1.—HUMILITY.

Is a virtue whose practice is somewhat difficult to one in the Pope's station. His attendants surround him with pomp, and his loving and admiring children throughout the world are pleased to see their Father made much of. We are thrilled with awe, love and joy at the grandeur, solemnity and splendor of the ceremonies of the Church when he officiates or participates in them. We insist on all—kings, emperors and other grandees—reverencing him as their superior, or on their standing back from his august presence. Yet, humility held a prominent place among the virtues which characterized Pius IX. He could, without laying aside his dignity, condescend, with a better grace than one would think possible, to associate and converse with the lowliest. At times, for instance, when taking his usual afternoon drive by way of relaxation from the cares of the day—on which occasions he must needs move in state, with church dignitaries in attendance and noble guards around him—he would step from his carriage and stop some poor old person on the road, to comfort, encourage and bless him. Or he might encounter a band of young students and chat with them pleasantly about their distant homes.

His visits to the different colleges, of which I have made mention, were, of course, much coveted and appreciated. The occasion of his first visit to our college will be long remembered by all present, and especially in the memories of the inmates it will ever be treasured as one of the brightest spots in their existence. Dignitaries and detachments from other colleges envied our success in giving the Holy Father a grand (they said unequalled) ovation. They envied us, too, and with reason, the more than ordinary com-

placence and interest he displayed towards us; but their envy was a holy one. He walked with us through the college halls, and, when in front of a bust of the "Father of his Country," he remarked that "Washington was a great man." Just then, hearing an English Monsignore (Talbot) whisper something about our *Hurrah!* he expressed a wish to hear an American cheer, which we thirteen youngsters accordingly gave, with a *vim* that would have drowned a thousand Italian *vivas*. The guards came rushing up stairs with drawn swords, thinking the uproar occasioned by a revolutionary outbreak (an affair of almost daily occurrence in that peaceful country!) The Holy Father playfully covered his ears with his hands and ran into an adjoining room, much amused and pleased with what many smaller dignitaries would have frowned upon and rebuked as disrespectful. Taking advantage of his indulgent affability and condescension, we obtained from him concessions which he had previously in his official capacity refused; among others, permission to keep the Blessed Sacrament in our private Chapel, it being already in a Church adjoining the college. We had prepared a large number of short speeches in many living and dead languages, but we had time for the delivery of only a few of them. He then addressed the assembly (numbering between two and three hundred) at great length, dwelling with much feeling on his domestic troubles, and with much enthusiasm on the progress of the Church in America. That was a glorious day.

Then we had another glorious day with him, *all to ourselves*. A few days after his visit to us he sent us an invitation to walk with him in the Vatican Gardens. Our hearts fairly jumped with joy. On the appointed

day it rained, thank God! and he took us through the great Vatican Library, and we enjoyed ourselves more than we could have done in the gardens. He showed us rare and valuable books, listened in one of the side halls to the rest of our little addresses, with which he was much pleased, and bade us repeat the "*Hurrah!*" adding that we need not fear being heard there by outsiders. In a word, he made himself and us perfectly at home. Having received presents and his blessing, after having been with him some three or four hours, we left, crammed full of happiness and a deal prouder than he was.

All this and much else of like nature revealed his habitual humility and condescending disposition. And it was remarked by all that, however much thus favored by him, one could not for a moment forget that he was the Vicar of Christ, so naturally did dignity sit upon him with all his humility. In him dignity and humility blended together, each enhancing the excellence of the other.

## 2.—CHARITY—FRATERNAL.

His charity, so far as this virtue refers to men, I can hardly, if at all, separate from his humility; for it was his charity that made him humble and condescending. Charity, which is the greatest of virtues, was certainly his predominant virtue. It seemed in him rather natural than acquired. His face always wore an attractive expression: a kindly smile ever played about his mouth: his eye gave forth a soft, compassionate, benign look: his voice was full of feeling and sympathy: he was most affable, uttering words of paternal advice and encouragement. It is difficult, if at all possible, to conceive how the flush of anger or the wrinkles of severity could find a resting place

on a countenance so serene and winning as was his. These characteristic graces made him irresistibly charming to all who came in contact with him. One could not help admiring, esteeming and loving him. However severe the tax on his patience, whatever the amount of labor imposed on him and of fatigue consequent on it, the bright, warm flame of his charity never waned, but ever glowed towards all, especially the poor, lowly, suffering, sorrowing. His "charity was patient, was kind, . . . was not puffed up, . . . was not provoked to anger, . . . bore all things." (1 Cor. xiii. 4.)

Nor was his charity of that kind which finds expression in mere "word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John iii. 18.) His reign was one of leniency and clemency to the erring. He strove to reclaim and reform, rather than to punish criminals as do other rulers. His laws were enacted and enforced for the benefit and welfare of his people, not for his own private interests. His capital was renowned for the number and grand scale of its institutions founded for the relief of every form of affliction which distresses humanity. In this respect his put to shame many of the most opulent and prosperous governments of earth, which often forget or but imperfectly provide for the weak and poor, who are unable to assert their rights. Then in the distribution of alms, he often completely divested himself of the immense quantities of gold and silver laid at his feet by the devotion and piety of Catholics throughout the world. When, for instance, we visited him for the first time, he apologized for giving us medals of an inferior metal, saying that he would gladly give us more precious ones, but his stock of them had run out, together with the means of sup-

plying their place. (Our medals were more dearly prized by us on that account.) At times he had even broken and melted down the insignia of his office and the sacred vessels, and distributed them to the poor in different countries. His frugal mode of life attests that his possessions were not for himself. For, while his devoted children gladly supplied him with the means of living in greater splendor than does any earthly prince, his personal expenses were really less than what an ordinary citizen here thinks fit to lay out on himself.—Such was his charity in its human development.

### 3.—CHARITY—DIVINE.

Of the divine virtue of Charity, considered as the love of God in his heart, I shall not speak, except as manifested in his zeal for the spread of divine truth, the increase of God's glory through his Church on earth, and for the salvation of souls. His zeal was manifested in the great concern with which he viewed the advances of our holy religion, especially in missionary countries, among which our own holds not the least prominence. He seemed to bear towards this new conquest of the Cross that more than common affection which finds place in the heart of a parent for his youngest child. He treated our Bishops as his bosom friends, and prized them as his coadjutors in the most promising portion of the Church. He received and entertained our Priests as veterans in the most momentous battle-field of the Faith. Our students he encouraged, and he seemed to foresee the fruits of their labors in the choicest section of the Lord's vineyard on earth. His zeal was manifest also in his founding of so many Sees in all parts of the world, especially on this continent.

Another evidence of his zeal is to be found in the establishment by him of numerous national colleges in the Holy City for the instruction and training of missionaries to all climes. These colleges were all under his inspection and shared largely in his paternal solicitude. Among those which owe their origin to his zeal and their success to his fostering care are those for the northern and southern continents of America. I may add here that his seeming partiality to the American Church, and exceptionally deep interest in all matters pertaining thereto, were, perhaps, due to the fact that, before his elevation to the Holy See, he visited these shores—the first of *St. Peter's successors to set foot on the New World*—and that from personal observation he probably learned to expect great things of us.

His zeal shone forth also in the frequent convocation of the Bishops throughout the world to attest and proclaim the triumphs of the Church. In one of those assemblies he set its most brilliant jewel in the diadem which adorns the brow of Her whom all generations call Blessed, by defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. He was, by the way, a most devoted servant and client of God's Virgin Mother. Her chaste spouse, too, came in for a large share of the earthly honors accorded by our Holy Father to God's favored servants in Heaven; for the faithful were bidden by him to revere St. Joseph as *Patron of the Universal Church*. In another of those august meetings the victories of many martyrs in Japan were celebrated, and their virtues held up for our admiration and imitation. At that time the Holy Father, with the Bishops around him, took occasion to condemn the infamous spoliation of the States of the

Church by northern marauders. His last convocation of the Bishops, for the purpose of holding a General Council of the Church, may be regarded as the crowning act of his illustrious life. Touching this Council, I shall merely observe that it would appear as if God took occasion to reward, even on earth, His servant's great devotion to the Divine Mother, by asserting through the Council the greatest of the prerogatives attached to the Primacy, namely, the Pope's infallibility in confirming his brethren in the Faith, and in feeding with moral precepts the lambs and sheep confided to his care by his Divine Master.

Let this much suffice concerning the virtue of charity, viewed in both its divine and human aspects, as illustrated in the person of Pius IX.

#### 4.—FORTITUDE.

Let me mention another virtue characteristic of our Holy Father, and then I will conclude. Perhaps in one of so mild and gentle a disposition as was Pius IX. the severer virtues could scarcely be expected to exist to any considerable degree; yet, when the cause of Religion demanded it, he displayed a *firmness* which compared favorably with that of any of his predecessors, not excepting Gregory the Great. Though ready, willing, even anxious to conform and to make all necessary and useful concessions to the just requirements of the times; still, when irreligion, infidelity, injustice, invasion, robbery, oppression, under the guise of progress, civilization and liberty, sought to secure his alliance to their covert schemes, he detected their plans and scouted their offers. And, when later they cast off their disguise and threatened to victimize and destroy him unless he yielded to their

ungodly desires and demands, he calmly, firmly and fearlessly answered them: "*Non possumus*,"—We cannot betray our sacred trust, or be induced by seductive promises or merciless threats to sacrifice the cause of religion, truth, justice and morality,—the safe-guards of the human race in time and its passport to a blissful eternity. When all earthly source of hope seemed closed, that old man stood firm, and with unwavering accent continued to utter: "We cannot, we cannot." Those words were the expression of his strength. His fierce, defiant and menacing foes chafed with demoniac rage at the sound of his voice, and they rushed headlong in the attempt to smother and silence it.

Victory seems to have lighted on their lurid banners; but their triumph is only a seeming one. Their hopes are vain: their efforts futile: their success shortlived and doomed to ultimate and speedy defeat; and the senseless originators of these proceedings, with their deluded associates, will reap chagrin, remorse, confusion. They are rushing madly into a vortex of irretrievable ruin, of woe unutterable. The Church will arise phoenix-like, clothed with immortal youth and smiling serenely on the crumbling ruins of human pride and audacity around her. Her Supreme Pontiff will stand firmly on the unshaken Rock of Peter, viewing the calm, and will fearlessly witness subsequent storms gathering, and new waves rearing their angry crests, confident that they too will vainly spend their fury and that other calms will ensue, to give as it were breathing time for the next onset. Thus throughout time will each trial of the Holy See be succeeded by a new triumph, till the Supreme Head, Christ Jesus, shall command the eternal calm.

## VALE!

I have drawn, in faintest traces, the outlines of some of the most striking and prominent features of the person, character and virtues of our Holy Father Pius. I leave to others possessed of sufficient penetrative, appreciative and descriptive powers (if there be any such) the task of producing the portrait in its completeness. If any such work be ever achieved, it will hold up to the admiration, esteem and love of men one of the most noble and devoted of God's servants,—for he was truly a saint,—and one of the most sincere and zealous among the benefactors of our race; for he spent his energies and his life for us. Nor had he ever a personal enemy, even among those who sought the overthrow of his sacred Office.

God, too, in an extraordinary manner made known on earth His complacency with him. Of the long list of Popes since St. Peter, Pius IX. alone was spared through a reign of twenty-five years. It was not natural to expect it. His pontificate was begun rather late in life,—in the fifty-fifth year of his age. His was an eventful and laborious life. Cross and trial and opposition and persecution were his lot,—such as would naturally have soon worn out an old man. But God sustained him through it all, and, in the thirty-first year of his reign and the eighty-fifth of his age, he still survived, with great bodily vigor, mental faculties unimpaired and his many virtues alive, green, active and fruitful as ever.—In that year the holocaust, to God and to God's children on earth, was consummated.

The Holy Father had survived those who had opposed and those who had supported him so long in

his endeavors to guard and advance the interests of the Church. Napoleon, Victor Emanuel, Cavour, La Marmora, and a host of others, (leagued together for the purpose of despoiling the Church of her sacred patrimony), had entered on their final accounting; and Pius the Ninth's intimate, long-tried, trusted and devoted attendants, such as Patrizzi in the spiritual order and Antonelli in the temporal, had gone to enjoy their reward and to usher him into heaven.

We should not grieve, beloved friends, at his taking away, but should rather rejoice; for he is happy, the Church is well provided for, and his further detention on earth would have been overburdening an already overworked and worn-out old servant of God and God's people, and withholding from him the well-merited reward of his brilliant virtues and protracted and onerous labors.

We may pray for him; and, while we pray for him, let us hope to enlist his prayers that we may all meet our Holy Father Pius in heaven.



262.13092  
P688cJ

34205

CASSIDY, JOHN F

262.13092

P688cJ

CASSIDY, JOHN F  
PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF POPE  
PIUS IX.

34205

MAY 19 1980  
hafranchi, D. 19804

